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ERIC, DATA ON THE DISADVANTAGED.

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THE INFORMATION RETRIEVAL CENTER ON THE DISADVANTAGED (IRCD) OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES TO THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY INTERESTED IN THE EDUCATION OF THE DISADVANTAGED. THE CENTER ANSWERS SPECIFIC QUESTIONS BY DRAWING ON ITS LARGE COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS AND ABSTRACTS, MAINTAINS A SPECIALIZED LIBRARY, AND PUBLISHES BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND BIMONTHLY BULLETINS DEVOTED TO A PARTICULAR TOPIC OF SPECIAL INTEREST. THE INCLUSION OF IRCD IN THE NATIONWIDE NETWORK OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTERS (ERIC) HAS ENABLED THE CENTER TO ENLARGE ITS DISSEMINATION SERVICES AND REACH AN EVEN LARGER AUDIENCE. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "PHI DELTA KAPPAN," VOLUME 48, NUMBER 7, MARCH 1967. (NH)

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The PHI DELTA KAPPAN *solicits and publishes articles designed to advance thinking in the fields of educational research, service, and leadership. Views expressed in an article, editorial, or review may support or oppose positions taken by Phi Delta Kappa as an organization.*

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COVER PHOTO This scene was photographed last summer in a Head Start class at Toledo, Ohio. Our thanks to Richard Allen Huston, director of Head Start for the Toledo Board of Education, for the excellent photograph.—**The Editors**

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ERIC:

"I am planning a training institute for teachers new to our inner-city schools. Can you suggest a reading list for such a group?"

"I would appreciate receiving from you any materials relating self-concept to school achievement."

"Please send me available abstracts on projects at the high school level which focus upon the identification of potential dropouts."

"We are concerned with research on the relationship of melody curve of speech and social economic class."

THE above queries are typical of more than 2,000 requests for information and advice which have come, during the past two years, into the twelfth-floor offices of Yeshiva University's Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged (IRCD) at 55 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Drawing on a growing collection of published and unpublished materials relating to the education of what have come to be called the socially disadvantaged, and drawing as well on its own growing expertise, the center staff has answered questions on special populations ranging from native Alaskans to gifted urban ghetto children, and on such topics as achievement motivation, new teaching methods and materials for slum children, techniques in group counseling, and language development among the deprived. In addition it has replied to inquiries

". . . the center . . . has answered questions on special populations ranging from native Alaskans to gifted urban ghetto children . . ."

MISS CALKINS is assistant to the director and MRS. GUSSOW research assistant, Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged, Yeshiva University.

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Data on the Disadvantaged

By PATRICIA CALKINS AND JOAN GUSSOW

from across the country for descriptions and evaluations of ongoing programs of compensatory education from the preschool to the college level.

IRCD had its beginnings during the early months of 1964, by which time it had become apparent that the struggle to attain quality education for all children was generating a vast amount of talk, a variety of program ideas, a profusion of subjective appraisals, and an unfortunate paucity of objective evaluations. Early interest in and support for such an information center came from the College Entrance Examination Board. CEEB had already demonstrated its concern with the problem of education for disadvantaged children when it had joined with the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students in sponsoring a comprehensive survey of programs of compensatory education. The outgrowth of the survey was not only a book (*Compensatory Education for the Disadvantaged,* co-authored by Center Director Edmund W. Gordon and former Associate Director Doxey A. Wilkerson) but a heightened awareness on the part of those involved in it of the dimensions of the problem. For the survey showed that although a large number of communities throughout the country were attempting to come to grips with the problem of educating those children whom the traditional school programs had failed to reach, most of these programs were utilizing little that was new in educational theory or technology. Rather, they were, as Gordon wrote, adding and multiplying techniques which had been successful with middle- and upper-class children in the hope of arriving at a formula for success with less privileged children.

Meanwhile, information that could be useful in mounting potentially successful programs was beginning to be available. For the schools were not alone in turning to the problems of the culturally different child. It was also clear that a growing number of investigators throughout the country were engaged in considering the developmental patterns of these children, looking into problems of motivation and self-image, examining different cognitive styles and different dialects to see what light the special characteristics of disadvantaged children might shed on their educational difficulties.

It seemed clear that some central facility was needed which could serve as a clearinghouse for information coming from the schools and from the researchers about what each of them was doing that might promote the effectiveness of the other. Out of an awareness of this need grew the Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged, initially a small but rapidly growing collection of documents and abstracts housed in a somewhat untidy corner of a shared office near Carnegie Hall in New York City.

From the beginning the center's objectives were clearly stated: 1) to make available to teachers, research scientists, and persons concerned with educational services up-to-date information relative to developments in this field; 2) to facilitate communication between the laboratory and the classroom by interpreting the findings of researchers to practitioners and the experiences of practitioners to researchers; 3) to promote interest in and concern with developments and problems of importance to the field through a bimonthly bulletin; and 4) to maintain an up-to-date collection of materials by means of regular monitoring of current publications, professional meetings, and reports from ongoing and completed research projects, supplemented by a wide variety of miscellaneous documents contributed by interested administrators, teachers, researchers, students, and others.

Formal announcement of the new center and its services was made in January, 1965, in the first issue of the *IRCD Bulletin.* In retrospect, the date was somewhat premature for the center's then small staff, which was almost overwhelmed by the immediate response for information which greeted the announcement. It was clear that the center and the bulletin were filling an information gap of enormous proportions. Each issue of the bulletin, which is now sent to more than 4,000 readers throughout the U.S. and abroad, is devoted to a particular topic related to the overall focus of the center. In addition to a comprehensive bibliography, each issue contains one or two articles on that topic. Recent issues have dealt with career development for the poor, language development among the disadvantaged, the Moynihan Report on the Negro family, higher education, and psychological testing. Future issues will deal with new tactics and strategies in education, problems of motivation and remotivation, behavioral analysis management and contingency management, and the Coleman Report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity.*

In addition to the bibliographies published in the bulletin, the center also has available a variety of special bibliographies on selected topics and makes up special bibliographies in response to requests for information relating to a specific question.

As its audience has enlarged, so have the center's resources. Now housed in its new quarters adjacent to the Graduate Center Library of Yeshiva's Graduate School of Humanities and the Social Sciences, the collection currently comprises some 5,000 documents, including program descriptions and reports, information on curriculum techniques and materials, theoretical articles, research proposals, and research reports. Moreover, though some abstracts have always been available, an enlarged abstracting staff has, in the last year, greatly increased the supply of abstracts of relevant

documents in the field. In addition to answering mailed requests, the center serves as a specialized library for the faculty and students in Yeshiva's Project Beacon, a program of research, training, and dissemination activities related to the psychoeducational development of disadvantaged populations. The collection is also available to other interested persons; and during the past two years visitors have come to the center from more than half of the 50 states and several foreign countries. Research scientists and graduate students are regularly found in the reading room making full use of that large part of the collection which consists of unpublished papers and reports, many of which are not available elsewhere. Teachers especially also avail themselves of the opportunity to browse next door in the Graduate Center Library, which maintains a collection of curriculum materials designed for inner-city schools and remedial reading programs.

As the size of the collection has increased it has been necessary to more clearly define its scope so as to more effectively serve the audience it seeks to reach. Currently, emphasis is given to: materials related to the effects of disadvantaged environments and status on cognitive and affective development; the academic, intellectual, and social performance of the disadvantaged young person; and ongoing programs and practices designed to help compensate for the special problems of the disadvantaged and to build upon their special characteristics. Because of the nature of the educational problems with which it is concerned, the center also keeps abreast of general developments in the areas of economic and ethnic discrimination, as well as segregation, desegregation, and integration in the schools.

Perhaps the greatest impetus to the growth of IRCD, as well as to the clearer definition of its area of concern, is its recent change of status. Just last fall the U.S. Office of Education announced that IRCD would become one of the specialized units in its new Educational Research Information Center (ERIC), serving as the satellite center in education for the disadvantaged for this nationwide information network. As an ERIC clearinghouse, IRCD has added some specialized functions. The center staff selects from all incoming documents those deemed of sufficient worth for the nationwide ERIC information system. Copies of documents so designated, together with a brief résumé or abstract, are forwarded to Central ERIC to be put on microfiche for dissemination to selected locations throughout the country where the entire collection of documents will be available to scholars, teachers, and others who need to make use of it.

Materials forwarded to IRCD, together with materials from other centers and reports of research supported by the USOE, are announced and indexed in the monthly USOE publication, *Research in Education* (available from the Government Printing Office, Washington). More significantly, perhaps, microfiche copies of all documents on file in Central ERIC will be available for purchase through these indexes. Currently a substantial portion of the IRCD holdings has been indexed by ERIC. Central ERIC will soon be able to utilize appropriate search operations in order to facilitate rapid handling of requests for information. In the meantime queries on specific topics will continue to be handled by the appropriate local clearinghouse.

Currently, therefore, though the attention of the technical staff is taken up with the collecting, indexing, and storing of materials so that they can be efficiently integrated into the ERIC system, IRCD's relation to the public remains unchanged. IRCD retains copies of all documents and abstracts designated for the ERIC system, as well as additional documents deemed peripheral in quality or scope. And search operations are still carried out in response to queries, in much the same manner as they have been during the past two years. In time, the clearinghouse will benefit from the ERIC affiliation by increased efficiency of operation and more opportunity for in-depth treatment of topics important to the center's major concern.

Plans for the future include a more active program of information analysis, synthesis, and dissemination. Already the center has entered into agreements with individuals, organizations, and institutions in need of the special services which the center is in a unique position to provide. Under such an agreement with the Office of Economic Opportunity, selected materials relating to early childhood education and development have been prepared and sent to OEO-sponsored Head Start and Community Action Programs. Bulletin supplements on special topics have also been published. Plans have been drawn up to enable the center to function as a special resource to programs providing in-service training for school personnel who will be teaching and administering schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. IRCD has provided the bibliographic background material for several conferences related to the disadvantaged.

Under the sponsorship of ERIC, as in the past, the center's overall policy is guided by an advisory committee made up of behavioral scientists and educators from around the country who are both knowledgeable in the area of the center's concern and committed to its objectives. These persons, together with the Yeshiva faculty, are available to the IRCD staff for consultation when questions arise which call on their various areas of expertise. With their help, IRCD hopes to make its contribution to what the Office of Education has termed "a national information system dedicated to the progress of education through the dissemination of educational research results and research-related materials."

However, in the final analysis, the success of IRCD, and of ERIC, as well, will depend on the quality of work in the field. For the impact of information processing and dissemination is greatly influenced by the quality and quantity of information available to be disseminated. For the completion of meaningful and useful research we must depend upon a productive research community, and for promising methodology, practice, and technology we must depend upon a viable pedagogical profession.

▼ In an article titled "Can We Stay Prosperous?" Stuart Chase says in the February 11 *Saturday Review:*

"City Living. Survey after survey shows American cities rotting at the core, surrounded by widening areas of urban blight. One of every eight New Yorkers lives in almost incredible squalor. Some tenements are packed with as many as 10 persons to a rat-infested room. Much of the city is a jungle where no one is safe after dark. Even inside some public schools, teen-age girls walk in pairs as protection against rape. Urban renewal and public housing are unable to offset the galloping deterioration. Great sums must be invested if cities are to be made fit to live in. . . . here is a field for workers displaced by automation."